

Assessment of Patient and Employee Mental Health During COVID-19

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BACKGROUND

- Many individuals have anecdotally reported a decline in their mental health due to worry and stress over the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Patients and employees at community health centers have been overlooked in terms of the effect of pandemic conditions on their mental health.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand how the mental health of these particularly vulnerable populations has been impacted.
- To offer recommendations for what can be done to address any unmet mental health needs.

METHODOLOGY

- Employees (n = 64) completed a 17-item survey and patients (n = 83) completed an 11-item survey.
- Surveys were administered virtually during July 2020 via email to patients and employees of the Community Health of South Florida, Inc., a Federally Qualified Health Center.
- Chi-square goodness of fit tests were used to analyze the Likert scale survey answers to determine statistical significance.

RESULTS

- 35% of patients and 45% of employees report new or worsening mental health since the COVID-19 pandemic started ($p = 0.895$ and 0.396 , respectively).
- 48% of employees and 50% of patients report that they would benefit from additional mental health resources ($p = 0.0253$ and 0.000139 , respectively).

Employee Responses Regarding Whether Others Would Benefit from Their Use of Mental Health Resources

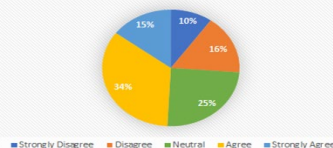


Figure 1: Employee responses to: "I feel that I would benefit from additional mental health resources if they were offered to me."

Patient Responses Regarding Whether They Would Benefit from More Mental Health Resources

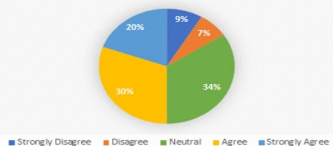


Figure 2: Patient responses to: "I would like it if more resources for maintaining my mental health were made available to me."

CONCLUSION

- New mental health concerns have arisen for both patients and employees since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Increased feelings of anxiety, depression, lack of interest or participation, and lack of energy were most reported in this study.
- Although efforts have been made to address these mental health needs, there is still a growing need for more resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Encourage employees and patients to take advantage of mindfulness applications.
- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) or Psychological First Aid (PFA) program training to foster colleague-to-colleague support.
- Implement respite areas in the workplace where employees can go to rest, re-energize and receive support.
- Encourage employees to take mental health days using PTO on slower work days.

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